

## THE NORTHWEST HORSE SOURCE

### EQUINE WELLNESS

## A Gift Beyond Measure

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December brings on a breadth of feelings: merry moments, holiday festivities, and benevolent inclinations. Winter becomes a season for giving, but why not use this month as a reminder that the giving shouldn't be limited to a season?

This month, we're once again visiting with Dr. Hannah Evergreen, a veterinarian who donates her holistic services year-round.

Evergreen got into alternative medicine during veterinary school. She was involved with holistic clubs and used a holistic vet for her own horse. After receiving her veterinary degree, she took courses to become certified in acupuncture and chiropractic medicine. She began her practice in 2004 and met a horse rescue called Hope for Horses through her husband, a small animal vet. While her practice was still getting off the ground, she found herself with a little spare time, so she offered her holistic services to the rescue.

"I thought, 'why not?' It's a win-win situation," Evergreen says. "The more cases I have, the more experience. So that is how I got started, and I have always kept time to do that."

Evergreen now works with four other horse rescue organizations, offering discounted and free services.

"I don't want to see a horse not helped because of a veterinary issue," she says. "That is why I went to vet school."

### Rewarding Experiences

For Dr. Evergreen, it is amazing and rewarding to see the changes in rescue horses from the time they are brought to the rescues through their recovery. They make miraculous progress, due mainly to the daily care at the rescue facilities. She still does routine vet exams that many horses never have; she does dental work and lameness exams, but the basis of her work is getting the horses used to human contact.

Many horses that come to rescues haven't been handled regularly, so they are not at all trusting of humans. Evergreen works with them slowly through stretching and massages before moving to more invasive tests or procedures.

Rescue horses can be a great learning experience for new veterinarians, as well. For anyone who wants to learn, horses that find themselves in a rescue situation frequently have more pronounced deformities or illnesses, making it easier for the vet-in-training to see the healing process.

"It is a whole different experience than treating horses who are pampered and spoiled," Evergreen says. "The rescue horses recognize your help and appreciate it. They know what you are doing and have a bond with you because of it."

### It's Personal

There are several rescue cases that are particularly close to Dr. Evergreen's heart, but one specifically that she adores.

A client called her out to euthanize an old mare, and when she arrived, the sight of the horse appalled her. The mare had abscesses in her front feet and was emaciated. Evergreen told the clients not to euthanize, but to send the mare to a rescue, where she then did all the initial vet care for free. Along with the rescue organization's volunteers, she brought the horse back from the edge.

“In the next year, she blossomed into a nice, shiny old mare,” says Evergreen. “She really was on death’s door. A number of them are like that.”

Another of Evergreen's "clients" had an injury to his front leg. The cornet band was displaced from a cut that had never been treated. Because of the neglect, the wound grew full of scar tissue and even began growing a new hoof higher on the leg.

Evergreen surgically removed the scar tissue and hoof material, and now the horse is recovering well. She says this sort of case helps her practice and learn, in addition to the benefit for the horses.

Many of her clients take in rescue animals, and she analyses everything on a case-by-case basis to determine what the horse needs, medically and holistically. Based on her assessment, the horses receive medical care, massages, and chiropractic work.

### **What You Can Do**

Everyone can donate their skills somewhere. Rescued horses not only need medical care, but training and handling. Just brushing and leading these animals can help build their trust in humans.

There are a number of rescue organizations in the Pacific Northwest. The website [www.horseworlddata.com/rescue.html](http://www.horseworlddata.com/rescue.html) has a state-by-state listing of horse rescues, but remember that these are not complete lists. Ask your local vets about the rescues they know of to get an idea of where there is a need.

If you don't have time to donate, rescues always need monetary donations as well as grooming items, blankets, buckets, and all the other barn items associated with caring for horses. You can always phone, write to, or email a local rescue and see what they need this winter. 'Tis the season, after all.